

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSA-01 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 ACDA-12 SY-05 OPR-02
MCT-01 /095 W
-----002325 011853Z /18

O 011800Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 8517
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, LE
SUBJECT: SITREP - BEIRUT SITUATION AS OF 1930 LOCAL JULY 1

REF: BEIRUT 3667 (DTG 011510Z JUL 78)

1. SUMMARY. DESPITE "CEASEFIRE" SUPPOSED TO TAKE EFFECT AT 1830
LOCAL, SYRIAN ADF FIRE CONTINUED AGAINST SOME PARTS OF EAST
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BEIRUT AS OF 1930 LOCAL. WE HAVE CONFIRMED THAT BACHIR GEMAYEL
WAS ARRESTED AT A SYRIAN ROADBLOCK ABOUT 1615 LOCAL, BUT RELEASED
SHORTLY THEREAFTER. CITY HAS BEEN IN HIGH STATE OF TENSION ALL
DAY, AND HEAVY SYRIAN BOMBARDMENT BEGINNING ABOUT 1600 APPEARS TO
BE UNRELATED TO ARREST OF BACHIR. END SUMMARY.

2. STATE OF TENSION. TODAY, JULY 1, HAD BEEN DECLARED "OFFICIAL"

DAY OF MOURNING BY PHALANGE PARTY FOR GREEK CATHOLIC PHALANGISTS KILLED IN NORTHERN BEKAA JUNE 28. ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES, BOTH PHALANGE AND NLP MILITIAS HAVE BEEN IN STATE OF FULL ALERT ALL DAY. ALSO IN WEST BEIRUT EMBOFF OBSERVED ARMED MILITIAS ON THE STREETS.

3. BACHIR GEMAYEL ARRESTED AND RELEASED. EMBOFF SPOKE TO PHALANGE POLITICAL BUREAU MEMBER KARIM PAKRADOUNI AT 1805 LOCAL. PAKRADOUNI HAD JUST SPOKEN TO BOTH PIERRE AND BACHIR GEMAYEL AND GAVE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT: BACHIR WAS TRAVELLING IN ASHRAFIYAH TOWARDS HADDATH AT ABOUT 1615 WHEN HE WAS STOPPED AT SYRIAN ADF ROADBLOCK (AT APPROXIMATELY 5250N 3320E). SYRIANS ASKED TO SEE PERMIT FOR WEAPONS HE HAD IN AUTOMOBILE. BACHIR RESPONDED BY SAYING HE DID NOT HAVE ANY AND DID NOT NEED ANY, SINCE HE WAS BACHIR GEYMAYEL. SYRIANS THEN ESCORTED HIM TO THEIR LOCAL COMMANDER. HE WAS RELEASED SHORTLY THEREAFTER. IMMEDIATELY AFTER INCIDENT, HOWEVER, LOCAL PHALANGIST "SKS" TROOPERS IN SOME FASHION ASSAULTED SAME SYRIAN ROADBLOCK.

4. ORIGINS OF FIGHTING. MAUDE FARAJALLAH (CONSTANT COMPANION OF CAMILLE CHAMOUN) TOLD AN EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE THAT SPREAD OF FIGHTING WAS DUE TO BACHIR'S ARREST. HOWEVER, BACHIR TOLD PAKRADOUNI THAT FIGHTING HAD STARTED EARLIER, AT ABOUT 1400, AND THIS TENDS TO BE CONFIRMED BY EMBASSY OBSERVERS: DCM HEARD SOME SNIPER FIRE IN DOWNTOWN AREA ABOUT 1300. BASHIR SAYS SYRIANS (WITH WHOM HE IS NOW IN CONTACT FROM THE PHALANGE PARTY HEAD-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUARTERS) CLAIM THEY RECEIVED FIRE IN AIN AR REMANNEH AREA AT ABOUT 1400 FROM FOLLOWERS OF NLP MILITIA LEADER ELIAS HANNASH. DATT SOURCES TEND TO CONFIRM THIS. RUMOR IN PRESS CIRCLES ALLEGES THAT TWO SYRIAN SOLDIERS HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED.

5. SYRIAN FIRE CONTINUES. AT 1930 LOCAL, RELIABLE SOUCE IN ASHRAFIYEH SAID THAT INCOMING SYRIAN FIRE IN THAT SECTOR HAS CEASED BUT THAT IT CONTINUED AGAINST AREAS OF BADARO AND TAYYOUNE CIRCLE. TANZIM LEADER GEORGE ADWAN CONFIRMED TO EMBOFF AT 1935 THAT INCOMING FIRE CONTINUED IN BADARO AREA. ADWAN SAID ORDER FROM LEBANESE FRONT "UNIFIED COMMAND" WAS, AND CONTINUED TO BE, TO NOT RETURN FIRE. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AT LATEST COUNT SOME 25 PEOPLE HAD BEEN KILLED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF EAST BEIRUT. (NEWS SOURCES SPEAK OF 22 DEAD.) HE SAID A "CEASEFIRE" HAD SUPPOSEDLY BEEN ARRANGED TO TAKE EFFECT AT 1830 LOCAL, BUT THAT-- AT LEAST IN BADARO--SYRIANS WERE IGNORING IT.

6. EXPECTATIONS. DANY CHAMOUN TOLD DATT AT 1900 THAT HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT SYRIANS ARE STRENGTHENING POSITIONS AROUND EAST BEIRUT AND HE EXPECTED MORE SYRIAN FIRE TONIGHT, IF A NEW AGREEMENT IS NOT FOUND. PAKRADOUNI TOLD EMBOFF AT 2015 THAT THERE IS SOME OPTIMISM IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES (HE HAD JUST TALKED TO FONMIN

BOUTROS) THAT CEASEFIRE CAN YET BE ARRANGED THIS EVENING, BUT HIS OWN SENSE IS THAT, SINCE BOTH SIDES CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN POSITIONS ON THE GROUND, SITUATION MAY CONTINUE TO DETERIORATE.

7. WEST BEIRUT TENSE BUT QUIET. OCCASIONAL ROUNDS CONTINUE TO HIT WEST BEIRUT, INCLUDING TWO ROUNDS NEAR LIGHTHOUSE AT ABOUT 1700. THERE ARE INDICATIONS SYRIANS HAVE REMOVED SOME FORCES FROM WEST TO EASTERN SECTOR.

DECON 7/1/79.

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